1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

unimportant; instead the man considers other factors such as his need for a wife, the marriage expenses including the bridewealth, and the physical attractiveness of the woman.

The previous relationship of the groom to the girl and her family can vary the bridewealth enormously. Often the groom, and/or his family, are acquainted with the girl, and/or her family, as neighbors and friends. When this is the case, then other factors tend to enter in to determine the bridewealth. But in a number of special and not uncommon situations, the groom is released from the bulk of the bridewealth or it is substantially lowered. If the girl is his cousin (the Kanuri marry all cousins, although they claim it is not good to marry one's mother's sister's daughter) then he may find that only a small *sada'u* payment is necessary. About one-fifteenth of all Kanuri marriages are of this kind, and of these about one-fifth involve unions in which the little cousin was promised to the boy when she was an infant at the time that he was circumcised, roughly about puberty. At that time he becomes her *luwali* or the dispenser of her marriage rights and can arrange for her future husband or marry her himself when she reached puberty. In other cases the groom is a dependent or client of the girl's *luwali* (usually her father) and the marriage tends to cement the relationship between him and the father even further. Indeed many subordinates of "big men" in Bornu think of their superiors as being obliged to help them find a wife. In such a case the groom may assume only a small portion of the expenses, or the wife-to-be is a daughter or relative of the superior and the latter depresses the payments purposely, so his subordinate can marry. In a few cases girls are given to *mallams* (koranic teacher-priests) and no bridewealth is required. Such unions are called "marriages of charity" and the *luwali* who abrogates his rights to bridewealth in this fashion is considered to be a pious man. In actual practice it is not very common. This is seen in the marriage histories of the *mallams* themselves who may have married once in five or six times this way but rarely more than that. *Mallams* claim that they do not like it because it makes them obligated to the wife-giver for free prayers, constant officiating as a religious leader in the household of the *luwali*, and so on, so that they avoid such charity in order to maintain their independence. This avoidance is mitigated if they are already members of the *luwali's* household and the marriage is simply cementing the relationship.

The bargaining abilities on both sides of the marriage can also determine the bridewealth. The groom's representatives are told by the girl's family, through her *luwali*, that the groom can expect many gifts which will compensate for an elaborate and expensive wedding. The groom's representatives tell the woman and her relatives, especially her *luwali*, of the groom's qualities, especially his kindness and generosity, his wealth and expectations of more, his potentialities as a successful man, and his connection through friends, through his own services, and relatives to very important people. On his side, the *luwali* speaks of the benefits to be gained by marriage to this particular girl and slowly the bridewealth payment, especially the *luwaliram*, emerges at a set price. On her first wedding night, a previously unmarried girl also bargains at great length in order to bid up a special consummation fee that is her right.

If the marriage arrangements take place in the autumn, or around harvest time, it is assumed that the man will have more cash than at other times. Thus the

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

882 veloped physically had not yet married. There were many rumors and much gossip
883 to the effect that she was no longer a virgin and that men of the town slept with
58 her. Her father, it was said, would have a hard time arranging her first marriage.
156 The girl herself seemed to be suffering increasingly from her inability to see herself in the role of a child awaiting marriage instead of that of a developing young matron—the role now common among her young age mates. Thus in order to take up a normal position in society, girls are supposed to have their first marriages in and around the time of puberty. Failure to do so indicates a deviant and degrading development. This is the reason why almost all Bornu men say that girls who go on
883 in the educational system are "spoiled" and should never be allowed to stay in
882 school beyond the traditional age of marriage. The girls in school see the matter
871 differently; the situation remains today one of tension, with the majority against
578 education for girls, and the schools themselves looking for students and preaching a somewhat different attitude toward a girl's adolescence than that held traditionally by the people.

882 Another point should also be noted. Most girls have very little choice, if
883 any, in their first marriage arrangements. If they are very drastically opposed to the union, their views are considered since parents are afraid they might behave badly
584 as young wives. However they are traditionally supposed to respect the wishes of their parents and comply with their demands. Indeed many Kanuri, both men and women, know very little about their first marriage arrangements at all since these are almost entirely made by their parents or the head of the compound they are living in at the time. It should also be realized that many Kanuri girls marry for the first time with men sometimes as much as two, three, and even four times their own age which enhances the traditional seniority of the husband as well as taking any "romance" out of it for the girls.

88 Sometime around the end of childhood and into the beginning of the teen-
304 age period young boys are circumcized. This event is fundamentally a ceremonial occasion and is thus related only in a rough general way to the actual onset of puberty for each boy. Generally speaking boys are cut in groups, although in rural areas it is not uncommon to see a family performing the ceremony for just one boy
554 in the household. On the other hand circumcision among high-ranking people such as village heads, district heads, members of the royal family, or rich traders in the city attracts many other families who try to have their own children cut at the same time to participate in the large festivities. Usually the higher the rank of the leading families involved in a circumcision the greater the number of boys who are likely to be cut at the same time.

881 The important thing is not the readiness of the boy. Rather it is the auspi-
571 ciousness of the occasion in terms of the family's relationship to the rest of the community. Is there a large circumcision taking place this year? Are a large number of friends and relatives asking when little Abba Gana is going to be circumcized? Have the household members, especially the household head, attended a great many marriage or naming ceremonies? Have other community members been given gifts on these occasions? Is it not time to reap the benefit of all this participation by having a ceremony of one's own to which many people will come and bring gifts of food, clothing, and money for the family and the boy? These and similar questions are the determining factors in the timing of the circumcision ceremony, and

586 587 with ease. Since most men marry a number of times in the course of a normal life, they are likely to marry women who have been married previously and whose earlier marriage (or marriages) has ended in divorce. An important distinction is made between a marriage with a girl who has never been married before, and marriages with women who have been married previously.

585 302 a) Marriage with a virgin. The adult Kanuri woman wears her hair in a striking coiffure which resembles a Trojan helmet. Adolescent girls who have not yet married wear their hair in totally different fashion. Their hair-do is divided into three parts, and they are referred to as kala yaska, a term for their particular developmental stage which derives from the hair-do that characterizes the stage. Since very high priority is placed on virginity for a girl before marriage, a first marriage with a kala yaska is equivalent to marriage with a virgin.

• 584 Marriages are frequently arranged, but consent of both boy and girl plays a part, even in marriages in which the boy is marrying for the first time and the girl is a kala yaska. A boy may come to his father to say that he likes a particular girl. It frequently happens then that the boy's father will go to the house of the father of the girl, bringing presents with him, to arrange the marriage. The father of the boy may also select a particular girl as wife for his son, ask the boy if he likes the girl, then make the arrangements with the father of the girl. A talaka may marry the daughter of a very good family, if he can raise the money needed for her bride-price. The sole

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584 565 obstacle to such a marriage is the bride-price, which will be high for a daughter of a good family. The father of a boy of good family, conversely, may arrange to have his son marry the daughter of a talaka if he likes the girl, particularly if she is very pretty. A talaka will not usually arrange for the marriage of his son with the daughter of a very rich man (a wealthy trader, for example), because the girl will eventually inherit wealth and her husband will have no claim to it, nor will the 584 565 557 boy's father ever see any of it. However, a talaka father may arrange for his son to marry the daughter of a kəntuoma (aristocrat) family in order for his son to benefit from his future father-in-law's influence in obtaining power, though the boy's own father will not himself directly benefit from the marriage.

581 The qualities desired in a kalə yaska spouse are as follows: a pretty girl is highly desirable in marriage; a girl with a nasty temper, one who curses people or has other undesirable personality characteristics (such as shamelessness--nungu ba) will not find a husband so easily. A pretty girl is better than a wealthy one, but better still is industriousness and willingness to work hard. Being able to cook well is also more important than beauty. If the father of a boy has two girls to choose from as brides for his son, one pretty and the other industrious and skillful, he will prefer the industrious 584 one for his son. If a girl does not like the boy suggested for her by her father, if she thinks him ugly, the marriage will not take place. The father of the girl will ask her if she likes the

584 boy; if she does not and refuses to marry him, the arrangements are for naught. The father cannot force the marriage, and marriages arranged solely by parents over the objection of the children, cannot take place.

582 369 Average age at which boys marry differs from the small villages to the larger towns. In the small villages boys marry young, and when they reach the age of eighteen or nineteen all are married. In the large towns and cities, boys marry after age twenty, and some do not marry until they reach thirty. Girls marry at the same age in the villages and in the cities.

582 If the girl's family is able to provide her with household equipment and clothing, she will marry at the age of eleven or twelve. If the family is poor she will marry slightly later, at the age of thirteen or fourteen. The minimum age of marriage for a girl is ten. A marriage at that age is possible, but the girl is con-

[833] sidered young. A husband usually waits before beginning to have sexual intercourse with a bride of such tender years. A boy

[591] may marry at the very young age of twelve or thirteen. If his father wishes to arrange such a marriage, he will build his son a house adjacent to his own, and husband and wife will grow up together. A boy will postpone marriage in order to accumulate money for a bride-price. If the father of a boy has no money to pay the bride-price for his son, the boy will postpone marriage for several years while father and son farm and save money. A girl never postpones marriage; by the age of fifteen almost all girls are married.

583 by Maliki law. Premarital bride-service is not permitted in lieu of the luwaliram. A man would be ashamed to go to his future father-in-law to say that he had no money to pay the luwaliram.

584 The girl is represented by her luwali in arranging a marriage. The luwali may be a relative or friend of the girl, but not her father (except in the case of a sadaka marriage noted above). The luwali states the amount of the luwaliram. The bridegroom may also be represented by someone, or he may make his own arrangements. The bridegroom, or his representative, may accept the stated price, or he may bargain for a lower price. The luwaliram is given to the luwali, who in turn passes it to [431] the girl's father. The girl's father gives a token fee to the luwali, gives presents to the groom which include both money and clothing, and gives his daughter household utensils and jewelry.

583 At the time of marriage, an additional payment, <u>sədagu</u> [430] (Arabic, sadak), is made. Sədagu is paid in the form of Maria Theresa dollars, two to five being the average amount of sədagu payment, though now eight shillings may be substituted for each Maria Theresa dollar. The size of the sədagu is arranged for before the marriage, and initial payment of part of the sədagu [586] may be made before the marriage. Should a couple divorce before the entire sədagu has been paid, the difference must be paid at the time of divorce.

Finally, in addition to both luwaliram and sədagu, there is still a third type of payment, called <u>məri</u>, which must be

His first marriage fre-
582 quently is with a kalɔ yaskə, but this is not always the case.
[587] Many young men of poor families marry a zogor when they marry
[556] for the first time. Since polygamy is permitted, and under Islamic law a man may have as many as four wives, men of important and wealthy families take more than one wife, and prefer to marry a kalɔ yaskə each time.

885 It was mentioned that the kalɔ yaskə takes her name from
302 the hair-do worn by girls before maturity. After marriage, with the permission of her young husband, she will have her hair redone according to the style which characterizes an adult woman. Thereafter she is not a kalɔ yaskə; she takes her place with
586 adults. Should she be divorced by her husband, she would re-
885 turn to the protection of her luwali. She is then eligible for marriage once again, though now she approaches the situation as a grown woman, and of course, one who is not inexperienced in sex.
[587] Attitudes attending the marriage of a kalɔ yaskə, and much of the ceremony involved, are no longer appropriate when a zogor marries.

586 A woman who becomes a zogor suddenly finds that she has a great deal of freedom in her behavior. Her luwali, or some older friend or relative, provides her with a room in his household,
[535] and men come to court her. She participates in the frequent outdoor dancing in which only zogors take a part since no self-
584 respecting husband would permit his wife to dance publicly. An
587 unmarried man enters into a relationship with a zogor which
[431] ideally should end in their marriage. If he is not already married, he comes to visit the zogor regularly, bringing her presents of clothing and jewelry. It is accepted that a man court-

It is accepted that a man court-
586 ing a zogor has sex relations with her. The zogor differs
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584 from a prostitute, who takes money from each man who has sex
587 relations with her. Prostitutes are known, and the practice
548 of prostitution is abhorred; zogors exist everywhere as a nat-
831 ural part of Kanuri social organization. The zogor does not receive payment for her services, nor does she ever receive several men in one night, a characteristic of prostitution which the Kanuri particularly single out as repellent to them. A zogor regularly is visited by the same man for a period of weeks. Ideally, this ends in marriage; however, if they find themselves incompatible the relationship is terminated and someone else comes to court the zogor, while the man enters into a
626 new relationship with another zogor. A woman who prolongs her status as a zogor for several years, because she enjoys the freedom which is permitted a zogor, or because she enjoys the attentions of many men without the responsibilities of marriage, begins to be thought of as a loose woman by the community. Few men would marry such a woman because such a marriage would not be expected to last.

595 Should a man have one wife and wish to marry a second, a zogor, he would begin to pay attention to the zogor. Noticing this, his first wife might become jealous, and might ask him, "What are you doing talking to that zogor?" Should he answer that he wishes to marry her, the issue is settled, as it is perfectly reasonable for a man to contemplate taking a second wife. However, attitudes towards a second wife vary among Kanuri wom-

B: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14

CHAPTER V [p. 99]

Marriage Relations

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Kanuri marriages are virilocal from the point of view of the woman, which means that she always leaves her residence to live in the compound of her husband. From the point of view of the man, marriages are patrilocal or neolocal. Thus a man either brings his wife to the compound of his father or very close to it, or else takes his wife to a new residence away from the residences of both their kin groups. Thirty-eight out of sixty-one informants in Magumeri reported bringing their first wives to the house of their own father or setting up a contiguous compound. For successive wives the number dropped to about one-half of those asked.

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The inception of the first marriage for young girls is decided upon by her family and chiefly among these her luwali or guardian,(1) who is most commonly the head of the household in which the girl is living at the time of her marriage. A luwali can stand in various relational positions to the young girl - he may be her father, her elder brother, her cross-cousin, or patrilateral parallel-cousin, or adoptive parent. When the household head is not the luwali, which can occur for example in the case of cousin wardship, then the luwali still has the rights of marriage dispensation over the girl. Indeed he would take anyone to court who tried to inveigle these rights away from him. Although such cases are known they are quite rare.

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The luwali's choice of potential husband is based on the availability of males seeking virgin wives plus his desire to create profitable relationships for himself. If he is a high status person, his wife-giving rights will be used most commonly to tie political and/or

(1) C.P., "lugali" in Ellision, R.E., Marriage and Childbirth Among the Kanuri, Africa: Vol. 9, 1936, pp. 524-535.

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585 the receipt of gifts from friends and relatives. Secondly, within this overall expense there is the bridewealth itself. Thus when considering marriage in Bornu it is necessary to distinguish between the capital outlay made for "taking" a woman,(1) and the total capital outlay for initiating and going through with a marriage proceeding. A Kanuri male can usually recall the exact figure of his bridewealth for most of his past marriages, but has some difficulty in remembering the entire marriage cost of all but the most recent of his nuptials.

[128] Rather than abstract out bits and pieces of the events of the marriage costs it will be more comprehensible to give a brief description of the payments made in connection with marriage inception in the chronological order of their occurrence.

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584 In the case of a virgin marriage, negotiations are initiated through a gift called the kwororam (the asking-a-question fee or gift). This gift is given most commonly by an intermediary for the husband to the luwali (guardian) as a gift to the girl's mother and/or senior female relatives. Included may often be a small gift for the girl herself. Information varies as to the amount of kwororam. Some felt that it should be fairly small, running from one to two pounds in cash value for the soap, cloth, pomade, perfume and other female sundries of which it was made up. But the amount is indefinite and there is room for haggling. One informant reported being told by a young girl's luwali that although he was certainly the favoured suitor another man of higher rank had been offering a slightly higher bridewealth payment. The anxious suitor was

[192] (1) The Kanuri never use the verb "to buy" when referring to marriage,
[595] substituting instead the verb "to take". This was explained as being a necessary distinction in the old days when concubines could be bought in the markets, while wives were always married, i.e. "taken".

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• 584 encouraged to increase his bridewealth offer and also to increase his kwororam gifts to the girl's grandmother (she had no mother in the compound) in order to increase his chances of acceptability. Only after enlarging his offer and his kwororam before witnesses did the anxious suitor discover that he was the victim of a ruse, and that there was no other bidder for the girl.

The kwororam is not considered part of the bridewealth within this present discussion or by the Kanuri themselves because it is not necessarily returnable by the girl's family if the arrangements proceed no further. It is therefore exactly what its name implies, a fee or set of gifts given for the privilege of asking and smoothing out any opposition from female relatives to the future negotiations between the girl's guardian and the would-be suitor.

The kwororam applies only to non-preferential virgin marriages. It is not practised in cousin marriage because these unions are arranged years before they are consummated. In non-virgin marriage the money and
587 (836) gifts which the man gives to the woman while he is sleeping with her, as a divorced woman, serve instead as the initiatory behaviour which may or may not lead to marriage. The man may also give small gifts of some cloth, soap, perfume, or other women's sundries to any senior female relative of the divorced woman, especially if she is quite a young girl or woman who values her elder's opinion.

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584 The Kanuri recognize that this practice has the utility of allowing some time to elapse while the parties prepare to go more deeply and seriously into creating the marriage relationship.

If there has been a kwororam, the luwaliram occurs one to three months afterwards. This payment is the largest single amount given by the male (with the aid of his supporters) to the female's group. It

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584 is arrived at through bargaining done between intermediaries for the husband-elect and the girl's luwali. The primary reason given for this use of intermediaries is that a man should not indulge in argument with his potential father-in-law. The luwali of the girl uses a number of arguments to persuade the suitor to raise the price of the luwaliram. Thus he tells of the qualities of the girl, her family connections, the large number of people to whom the luwaliram must be distributed, i.e. the people who have a claim or an interest in the girl's marriage. He often hints broadly at the gifts which the young man may expect from the girl's family to offset the expense of the payment, in order to assure the suitor that the bridewealth payment is only a returnable token which should be raised in order to add dignity and prestige to the entire affair. Most of it, in all likelihood, he suggests will be returned at the next ceremony (sada'a) on the day of the wedding. The luwali also tries to assure the groom's party that the girl will have a very fine dowry of enamel plates, clothes, pots, pillows, mats, jewellry, etc., which will give the groom much prestige and perhaps even a source of capital. The luwali may complain that he is spending a lot of money on the dowry, which he feels must be compensated by a high bridewealth payment. The husband-elect, on the other hand, tries to point out through his intermediaries how much the marriage expenses in general are costing him and how the entire negotiation may endanger his socio-economic status. However, he must not push such an argument too far or his suit might be considered ill-advised. His best argument is usually a threat of withdrawal, or a feint in that direction, at which point the prices may be lowered somewhat as an inducement to his re-entry into the fray.

[602] The luwaliram payment is distributed by the luwali among the close bilateral relatives of the young girl, although he keeps a major

portion of the money for himself.. The pattern emphasises the patrilateral group, especially the relatives living in close association with the luwali who are often as not his agnates. However, the girl's mother, her mother's brother and her mother's own parents, if present or nearby, always receive a small part of the luwaliram.

With increased age and number of divorces, marriages become more and more an individual matter between the male and the female participants and the woman tends to take over the luwaliram payment for herself. She may be living with relatives at the time who often serve as her intermediaries and collect the payments for her. In this case she gives them a small amount of the luwaliram payment.

With the completion of the luwaliram payment the final arrangements for the marriage are settled by the parties. The day of the wedding is set in the period of the next few weeks as well as the place of formalization and the price of the sada'a, or second and final payment of the bridewealth. During the time of the luwaliram payments the man tries to iron out the details of the wedding party. How many drummers will there be? How many people are coming (if the girl lives in another town)? What will be the means of conveyance for her and her dowry to the house of the groom? Will many of the wedding party besides the girl's mother stay for the one week confinement period (if she is a virgin)? A score of such questions and decisions about them are usually discussed and agreed upon at this time.

If the marriage does not take place after the payment of the luwaliram, generally speaking it can be expected that litigation of some kind will result. If the man breaks it off himself, then the girl's family (or the woman) usually feel aggrieved and try to keep some or even all of the payment. Contrarily, if the girl's family breaks off the wedding,

584 091 the man requests that the luwaliram payment be returned to him (as it should be traditionally). Very often a man may try initially in the judicial proceedings to regain his entire investments, asking not only for the luwaliram, but a sum which includes his entire outlay of capital to date for the wedding. In such cases the position is usually just a beginning for bargaining. However, if the adjudicator can be convinced that the girl's or woman's group intended to defraud, or break faith from the very beginning of negotiations, the man might possibly be awarded more than just the luwaliram by the court. On the other hand, either party has the right of retraction before the formal wedding day ceremony (sada'a) which for the man means forfeiture of his payments, and for the woman and her group, means repayment of the luwaliram to the rejected suitor. For example, in one case observed, a man was repaid his luwaliram because a higher bidder had come on the scene.

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585 In the early morning on the day of the wedding the groom with his male friends and relatives, along with male friends and relatives of the bride's household, meet at the household of the luwali, or at the house of a ranking person of the ward or town for the sada'a. The tendency is to use the luwali's house more among higher ranks in the city, while lower status groups and rural people generally use the compound of a local ranking person. At this time the second and final payment of the bridewealth, the sada'a is made. It is most commonly referred to in Maria Theresa dollars although most often paid in pound sterling. For peasant non-virgin weddings in the Magumeri area during 1956-7, the price seemed to be fairly standardized around the value of 4 M.T. dollars (28-32 shillings). The disposal of this payment is similar to that of the luwaliram.

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The major part of the ceremony is given over to examining

582 In almost half the cases of cousin marriages recorded they are first marriages for the man. On the other hand it is quite rare, female speaking, for cousin marriage to be anything but a first marriage. 584 This is due to the usual method of inception in which the girl is promised as a small child to the boy at his circumcision. If the young girl is given to the boy and comes to live with him in his compound then he is more in the position of guardian to her, or adoptive father, and marriage does not result. If the girl remains in her own compound, or in others, the boy may marry her. In either case he has the primary rights of marriage dispensation over her from that time on. One informant described his own experience with the girl he was just about to marry in the following terms:

582 584 304 881 When I was kaja (circumcised) the girl was given to me; she was only eighteen or nineteen months old at that time; she had been weaned about one month. When I was kaja, they gave me a spear, a watch, a ring, a sword, many robes, and a fine hat (the informant is the eldest son of a well established Village Head). Then my abagana (Fa-Yo-Bro) came and said, "Stand up". We were thirty-five kaja boys at that time, all clothed and taken care of by my father; my father has many chu'una (namesakes). (The informant means here that his father had given each of the boys a robe, he also means that some of the thirty-five boys were being totally supported by his father). My father's mother sat very close to me; she raised me as a child. She said, "Do not stand up for your abagana (Fa-Yo-Bro) unless he gives you his girl." All my family and friends came and brought many gifts. Then my abagana came and put two pounds into my pocket, and said, "Stand up", and I said to him, "No you must finish our custom." After a while he said to me, "I give my girl Palmatta to you". Then my father's mother said, "We agree with you, and she is now our girl."

Today this custom can be practised any time after the circumcision by mutual agreement of the parties involved, although traditionally it is supposed to be carried out at the circumcision.

587 567 [593] In the one case observed of a non-virgin cousin marriage the informant was a slave of very low status who had married a divorced woman who was his Mo-Bro-Da (she was not a slave). The woman was extremely

837 households when her husband was away. Several informants remarked that it was apparent, now her husband was away, that she wished to have some tum-tum (pleasure, with a sexual implication).

593 837 Whether or not the husband is away, women must leave the compound for ceremonies, water carrying, helping other women to prepare for ceremonies, going to market, etc. Only men with wives in seclusion can restrict, and then only partially, female activities beyond the household. Within this framework, all Kanuri men know from their own experience how easily liaisons can be set up with married women, and therefore become anxious and mistrustful of wives who leave the compound too often.

837 584 The covert subversion of marital fidelity norms is also illustrated in the role of the sərsər. The sərsər is an old woman who for a fee, acts as an intermediary between a man and a married woman in promulgating a future marriage between them, which presumes the divorce of the woman from her present husband. The relationship arranged between the man and the married woman by the sərsər often infers an adulterous sexual union as well. If discovered by the husband, the old woman is often taken into court with her male employer and fined heavily. However, among males who value their respectability, the old woman is usually warned at first to stay away from the compound, and the wife admonished not to have anything to do with her.

832 Another illustration that documents the social recognition of female desire for sexual freedom is the concept of tarwo which refers to walking about looking for a partner for sexual intercourse. Any man or woman walking about the town alone is suspect of tarwo. There are a few definitive signs such as man having his hat pushed for-

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[565] only the upper classes can afford to maintain and enforce such a relationship. The remaining categories can be regrouped under two headings.

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557 Firstly, there are marriages in which a man obtains a wife by virtue of his relationship to an extended household organization and its head. The household head uses his luwali role (and in some cases his influence over other luwali) either to strengthen or create [582] obligatory relationships with other men. In some cases these unions take the form of cousin marriages (nyia durbe). In others, they merely emphasize already existing superior/subordinate relationships, while in still others, they serve as the initiating circumstance for an attempt [583] at such a relationship. As we have seen, gift marriage (nyia sada'abe) in which a girl is given to a Koranic mallam also entails the mutual understanding of an obligatory, subordination by the Mallam to the luwali.

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[584] Secondly, in marriages of agreement (nyia ardiabe) and discovery (nyia kolatabe), the major arrangements are made between the man and the woman alone without recourse or subordination to a household head. These marriages illustrate the adaptation of marriage arrangements to the realities of Kanuri social life. Given the large population and the high divorce rate it is not possible of feasible for all weddings to function as mechanisms for strengthening and creating superior-subordinate relationships. And so this second variety of marriage arrangement operates because many women, especially as they grow older, are not willing to be pawns used for the purpose of defining relationships between men. By the same token, many are not willing to become obligated to others through marriage.